

5 eBay Selling Tips for Newbies

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I'm directing this article to those who are just starting their eBay Selling Venture. Whether you're selling books, DVDs, CDs, collectibles or clothing, all things (with the exception of eBooks and services) need to be mailed. And it's the postage, handling fees and mailing that seems to cause a great deal of angst among new sellers.

You've heard the advice - don't overcharge for shipping. That is very good advice, indeed, as nothing turns off potential buyers like sellers who gouge you on the shipping costs. It's also a practice that can rack up bad feedback.

However, I'm going to play Devil's Advocate here and suggest that you don't go overboard and give so much of a break on shipping that you're chipping away at your profits. It's good to remember the "hidden costs" of shipping: bubble wrap to secure your breakables, tape, shipping envelopes, boxes, etc. Then there's the gas you put in your car to take all those trips to the post office.

You might think I'm being cheap, but, if you added up all your eBay expenses for the year (as some did for their recent taxes) you might be shocked to see how all the packing materials and gas for your car added up and took a little chunk out of your eBay profits. And, believe me, they do add up.

Some people are even more surprised to find they underestimated the weight of their packages, causing their profits to shrink even further.

How can you be fair to both you and your buyers?

1. Buy a scale. It may sound simple, but purchasing a scale can save you a bundle in shipping. If you're just eyeballing the weight of the package, you can often times guess too low, and be in for quite a shock when you go to the post office and see the package is going to cost twice what you thought to ship.

2. Know the dimensions of your packaging before listing the item. Some packages cost more to ship because of their dimensions. Knowing the weight alone isn't enough.

3. Offer the buyer a variety of shipping methods. Some prefer speedy delivery with Express mailing, while some prefer to save money with parcel post even though the wait is longer. It's always a good idea when using parcel post or other slower ground shipping to alert the buyer by email that it can take anywhere from 8 to 10 days.

4. Save yourself money whenever possible by using boxes that have been used. Most stores are more than happy to let you rummage through their old boxes and take some home with you. But, do remember to choose boxes that are presentable, secure and strong enough for your items. And, if you have breakables, don't skimp on the bubble wrap.

5. Give yourself a small handling fee that will cover your expenses. Some sellers add on an additional \$1 or \$2 to the shipping fees for their handling fees (depending on the cost of the item and how much packaging you have to use). I really advocate doing this because your expenses will add up if you do a lot of selling on eBay. Be sure to be upfront with your buyers that you have

a small handling fee so they can't complain about it later.Â
Being fair to both yourself and your buyer will keep you both happy, and keep more of your profit in your pocket.